

**FY07 Accomplishments and FY08 Goals
of the
City of Rockville's
Commission on the Environment**

The Commission is pleased to present its goals and accomplishments to the Mayor and Council, the City staff and the citizens of Rockville. We have organized our submission to reflect our own organizational structure:

- Overall Environment Commission
- High Performance Building Working Group
- Watershed Protection Working Group
- Environmental Outreach and Education Working Group.

Each working group is comprised of at least two Commissioners as well as community volunteers who either work or live in the City of Rockville. The working groups were formed (in consultation with the City Clerk's Office) in 2005-2006 on a trial basis to advance the workload of the Commission and attract volunteers through focused objectives and work areas. After having limited success filling a roster of experts (part of our charter), the Commission formed the working groups and has found that the working groups have gone further in meeting the need for expertise and support. The working groups have also become fertile ground to reach out and identify new appointments to Commission vacancies. While all vacancies are advertised and not all recommended candidates come from the working groups, we have had several Commissioners emerge as candidates from their active participation in a working group. In the working groups, they learn the business of the Commission; become acclimated to our procedures and in the end require minimal learning curve to come up to speed with the operation of the Commission.

This past year has witnessed continued growth and momentum in the working groups and they have begun to hit their stride. Goals were set last year and we continue to work toward them and to advance new ones. In the following sections, we provide our goals and accomplishments.

FY08 Goals

For fiscal year 2008, the Environment Commission looks forward to working with City staff and the Mayor and Council on the acceptance and implementation of the Sustainable Rockville Strategy. Having interfaced and provided feedback on the strategy over the past year, we look forward to seeing and measuring its success. In the subsections that follow, we outline our Commission goals as they align to the overall Commission and the individual working groups.

Overall Environment Commission

- Continue to provide issue analysis and testimony to Mayor and Council on various environmental issues facing the City.
- Assist City staff and Mayor and Council in developing relationships with outside organizations at various governmental levels, professional societies and organizations, interest groups and others entities –particularly as a new focus on climate change occurs at the Federal and State level where funding opportunities could bring environmental investment dollars to the City. For example, leveraging the Environment Commission’s Presidential Volunteer Service Award that recognizes the level of volunteer effort by the Commission could be used possibly as cost-share to Federal grants from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency.
- Assist City efforts to measure, baseline, monitor and chronicle specific environmental activity to create databases of case studies, lessons learned, best practices and other Rockville-specific data that can assist citizens, City staff and the Mayor and Council on decisions related to environmental investments in homes, businesses, schools, green space, watersheds, etc.
- Work with the City staff and Mayor and Council to gain acceptance for an initial set of environmental metrics to establish a baseline and then commit to annual reporting and measurement of these metrics. This will allow the City to benchmark its performance against other comparable jurisdictions and gain an understanding of other environmental actions that are reasonable for the City to undertake.
- Recruit additional volunteers for the Working Groups.

High Performance Building Working Group

- Work to raise awareness among all appropriate Rockville City points of influence to ensure that “Green Building” requirements are met and exceeded for the Twinbrook Station development.
- Work with City staff and the Mayor and Council to facilitate and support the development of a “Green Building” Ordinance, including developing analysis of a rough estimate baseline of energy consumption in the built environment and assisting in facilitating a stakeholder process to vet the elements under consideration for the ordinance.
- Continue to develop and publish energy tips for homeowners and small businesses.
- Work with the outreach group to develop seminar/exhibit materials that can be used to present environmental concepts on high performance buildings and energy savings to various sectors of the communities.
- Work with the other working groups to reinvigorate the environmental excellence award program.
- Create more interface with HOAs to bring best practices and other environmental information to them and their members.

Watershed Protection Working Group

- Continue to formalize comments and inquiries to the Department of Public Works on the Cabin John Watershed Study and Plan.
- Finalize, print and distribute the business brochure on Water Protection and on the new Water Quality Protection Ordinance and begin the development of a residential water protection brochure.
- Continue and extend the education of working group members on stream monitoring to develop and assist City staff in the implementation of a community-wide volunteer stream monitoring program.
- Perform Spring and Fall stream cleanup events with advance planning and publicity to gain broader citizen support.
- Begin to identify and develop an outreach approach to schools on water protection
- Coordinate and work with the Outreach and Education Working Group to develop exhibit and handout materials to increase awareness for watershed protection issues through the Environmental Commission's attendance at more community-based events.

Environmental Outreach and Education Working Group

- Help shape the communications interface of the Commission by providing a consistent look and message.
- Educate and encourage the citizens, schools and businesses of Rockville to take environmentally responsible actions.
- Assist Commissioners and/or working group volunteers in coordinating with other City Boards, Commissions, task forces and others City groups as needed to ensure that regular reporting and information exchange between the assigned Commission liaison and the rest of the Commission occurs in a timely and meaningful way.
- Assist the Commission and other working groups in the design and development of outreach materials.
- Work with the City on an improved plan for an approach to environmental awards—including recruiting candidates and providing ways that awardees benefit by receiving the recognition—opportunities to share their experience by participating in a speakers' bureau or putting general profile about their awarding winning actions on the website so best practices can be shared, etc.
- Work with the City on concepts for a City-wide environmental fair to bring best practices, products and demonstrations to residents and business owners
- Increase and improve the environmental information available on the Rockville website.

FY07 Accomplishments

In fiscal year 2007, the Environment Commission responded to many issues raised by the Mayor and Council and/or City staff, and then began to move out on our own internally generated goals based upon needs we have identified within the City. Below we present our overall accomplishments as well as the accomplishments of our working groups.

Overall Environment Commission

- The Commission invited a number of guests and had an active roster of individuals appearing before the Commission on their environmental recommendations for the City. These individuals and/or organizations included:
 - The Potomac Conservancy's "Growing Native" native plant program
 - Marsha Douma's plan for Pedestrian Walkways around the City
 - "Green" elements of JBG's Twinbrook Station development
- City staff also came to the Commission to provide updates and inform the Commission on the following City actions and practices:
 - Victor Sajauskas and Steve Davis on City anti-graffiti laws and practices
 - Somer Cross presented on the progress made by RORZOR
 - Lise Soukup on the proposed stormwater utility fee
 - Mark Charles on the water quality protection ordinance
- The Commission also provided testimony to the Mayor and Council on several City matters, including:
 - The Water Quality Protection Ordinance
 - The Refuse and Recycling Program
- Attendance at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) workshop on Green Building practices around the country.
- Attendance at the Montgomery County Council Hearings on green building practices and further tracking and review of the green building ordinances enacted by Montgomery County and the District of Columbia.
- Developed an anti-graffiti issue analysis and sought input on the current status of the City's policies and implementation.
- Met with the Rockville Library staff to dialog on the environmental seminar and vendor series.
- Reviewed the City's GIS parcel layer as a way to formulate a possible baseline estimate of energy consumption in the City's built environment. This effort was supported by activities of the High Performance Building Working Group to identify average energy consumption statistics for Maryland or for our local utilities by space type.
- Monitoring and tracking developments at the State-level with regard to the Governor's Transition Plans and Summits on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

- Participated in the interview process for a new staff member for the City's Environment Division who will focus on water protection and stream clean-up and other monitoring programs.

High Performance Building Working Group

- Participated in developing and providing exhibit elements for the Rockville Science Day Exhibit. Gave away free Compact Fluorescent light bulbs to attendees stopping at our booth.
- Provided input to the energy elements of the Sustainable Rockville strategy.
- Conducted research on green building initiatives and LEED "Green Neighborhoods".
- Arranged for JBG to provide a presentation on the Twinbrook Station redevelopment project and its "green" elements.
- Conducted green building research and reviewed ordinances from other jurisdictions.
- Developed a list of energy saving tips that was reduced to a short list of four tips to be published in Rockville Reports. The group will continue to develop tips on relevant energy saving topics for both homeowners and small businesses.

Watershed Protection Working Group

- Reviewed and formulated comments on the Cabin John Watershed Study and Plan in preparation for the upcoming update of that plan.
- Designed and developed a water protection brochure for businesses and gained the feedback of the other working groups and the Commission.
- Working group members attended the Audubon Naturalist Society stream monitoring program and then began participating in their team monitoring efforts.
- Participated in the cleanup of the stream near Southlawn and Avery Road. The event took over 2.5 hours. More events are being planned for next year.

Environmental Outreach and Education Working Group

- Developed a detailed recommendation for an Eco-Fair, but postponed presentation based on the library series. We plan to move this recommendation forward in 2008.
- Attended other eco-fair events to determine features most applicable for Rockville.

- Conducted brainstorming sessions with the other working groups to develop a design for a three panel tabletop exhibit that can alternate topics depending on the event. Planning a meeting with the City Graphics Department to develop this, as well as a common look for Commission brochures. The first brochure released will be aimed at Rockville businesses on general watershed protection practices and the new water quality protection ordinance.
- Provided input on the watershed protection brochure.
- Began investigating “green vendors” for Rockville events and looked into other jurisdictions and their environmental award programs.

The Environment Commission is pleased with the momentum that has taken place over the last year. We accomplished these things in spite of difficult losses as experienced in the passing of Commissioner Jerry Leighton, and in operating for most of the year with less than a full roster of Commissioners. We look forward to starting FY08 having filled all outstanding vacancies. Of course, all this effort could not be accomplished without support from our working group volunteers and we want to acknowledge their contributions to these efforts.